

Reflective Presence: A Buddhist Hakomi Training

To study the Buddha Way is to study the self.

Zen Master Dogen

The Reflective Presence program is intended to provide foundational training for anyone in a helping, teaching, or healing profession. This training, led by Flint Sparks and Donna Martin, combines the wisdom of Buddhist traditions and teachings with the Hakomi Method, a powerful process of self-inquiry supported by loving presence and mindful awareness. The teachings and practices of the Buddha provide a map for awakening from our sense of separation and realizing liberation from suffering. The Hakomi Method is a process of interpersonal mindfulness and deep inquiry as a relational practice—a practice for cultivating the experience of wholeness, compassion, and well-being. You can learn how to provide this experience for yourself and for others: for your students, clients, family, and friends.

*“The power of mindful awareness to promote physiological, psychological, and interpersonal well-being seems to emerge from this freedom it can offer from the prison of rigid identification with the habits of one’s own mind... Ronald Epstein suggested that professionals need to engage in ‘mindful practice’ in order to bring themselves more fully, with **reflective presence**, to the clinical relationship... Reflection is no longer a luxury, it may be a necessity for our survival.”*

Dan Siegel, *The Mindful Brain* The Reflective Presence training also draws on contemporary research and teachings in interpersonal neurobiology, body psychotherapies, group dynamics, including aspects of Big Mind process and Internal Family Systems, bringing these profound yet diverse teachings into a fully integrated training for the first time.

*“Thoughts and emotions will always arise. The purpose of practice is not to get rid of them... Without feeling threatened or trying to control them, just let things arise naturally and let them be. When ego-mind becomes transparent through meditation, we have no reason to be afraid of it. This greatly reduces our suffering. We may actually develop a passion for seeing all aspects of our mind. This attitude is at the heart of the practice of **self-reflection**.”*

Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche, *It’s Up to You: The Practice of Self-Reflection on the Buddhist Path*

The work in Reflective Presence goes beyond individual competencies toward the building of a compassionate community of practitioners. Since awakening and personal maturity is fundamentally relational, and not a reflection of the particular state of any one individual, our capacity to develop a group grounded in reflective presence is not only potentially transformational, but quite essential.

“Really growing up, becoming truly ourselves – this takes openness and receptivity, inspiration, a loving heart, stability and persistence, trust in the world and in yourself. It takes a peaceful mind, but also an active, decisive, and courageous mind. It takes knowing how to live, knowing how to choose, and knowing how to share those choices with others.”

Norman Fischer, Taking Our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up

The Buddha's teachings pointed to this truth, contemporary research in the neurosciences supports this ancient teaching, and our experience in committed practice verifies this reality every day. We believe that the fruit of this integrated method goes well beyond personal change or individual development, and flowers in the cultivation of loving relationships and caring communities.

“We are participatory beings who inhabit a participatory reality, seeking relationships that enhance our sense of what it means to be alive.” Stephen Batchelor, Buddhism Without Beliefs

[Flint Sparks](#) and [Donna Martin](#).